

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—James Freeman Clarke.

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CHRISTMAS CAROL.

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King,"—
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel-sounds
The blessed angels sing.

But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring.
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing.
Oh, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For, lo! the days are hastening on
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When Peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

—Edmund Hamilton Sears.

"MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU."

And what is the peace from God which comes through the mediation of Jesus?

First, we say, peace of mind, rest from those tossings of controversy for which there is no umpire or final appeal. "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am." Human reason, after its guessings and roamings from sect to sect, yearns for a Lord and a Master, not to crush it down, but to take it up, weak, bewildered, and weary, and fold it in that Divine Reason whence alone it borrows vigor and illumination. Here is rest from the trials of faith, peace from the janglings of sect, assurance after the twilight gleams of our own intuitions. If you have been through the circuit of guess-work after truth, and, like the man lost in the boundless woods, come back at evening to the spot you left in the morning, you will find how sweet is the intellectual repose in the Reason of God or the Word made flesh. "I have wandered long and far," says one of these men, "but have not found the rest which you say is to be obtained. I have interrogated my own soul, but it answers not. I have gazed upon nature, but its many voices speak no articulate language to me, and more especially when I gaze on the bright page of the midnight heavens, whose orbs gleam upon me with so cold a light and amid

a silence so portentous, that I am terrified with the spectacle of the infinite solitude." To the intellect weary with its wanderings, and with no God-ward determinations, appeals the doctrine of one God and one peace-maker between God and man. I do not mean by this that repose in the Christian atonement or faith in the Christian revelation forbids or supersedes investigation, doubt, denial, and the most careful balancing of evidence. No: doubt if you must, deny if you must, weigh the arguments in the nicest intellectual scales. The clearest affirmation comes after doubt; but alas for the search after truth that goes down in darkness! Alas for the gropings after God that diverge away from him till he is out of sight and out of hearing, and because the greatest and best minds in all the Christian centuries have used the highest faculties of reason and investigation till doubt has melted away in the broader illuminations of the Word, I urge with renewed confidence the claim of the one peace-maker between God and men.

Peace to the heart consumed with its fevers, lacerated with its passions, wounded in its deepest sympathies and affections, tainted with the poison of self-love, till touched and pervaded with the love of God. And it is not touched and pervaded with the love of God while he is far off in the eternal abyss, or a sovereign enforcing arbitrary decrees only for his own solitary glory. But through this mediation he does open the channels for our hearts to go up to him and the Divine heart to throb down to us and fill this great chasm in the soul, this want of some object worthy of its immortal desires and endless aspirations.

Peace to the conscience. What anxiety, what weariness in endless self-analysis, in always looking into ourselves, in trying to take ourselves to pieces and put ourselves together again as they do watches that will not keep time. This is what some people call self-culture, and it is a kind of culture which, too much followed, is sure to end in self-bewilderments and self-disgusts. How unsatisfying this kind of self-culture, at least to a spiritual nature quick and intuitive! Do your best, and it is not God's best, and the accuser has you in his eye and follows you with equal steps and corners you up and goads you and worries you. Acting from ourselves only, we do nothing that satisfies us and always carry about the burden of a tormenting self-consciousness. And you rest from this by passing over through the Christ to him who takes the work upon himself in the sovereign mouldings of the divine grace.

Peace after storms, for in the one Mediator are solved those mysteries of life and death that perplex and trouble us. For he turns upon them the light of immortality, and shows the end they are working out. And, seen thus, they are like the crests of the waves when kissed by the breaking sunbeams and sinking into calm. And so for the mind and the heart and the conscience and for the events that bear us onward, "There is one peace-maker between God and men—the man Jesus Christ."—*Edmund Hamilton Sears*.

THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS AN INCREASING POWER.

The world makes progress by its ideas, and the ideas which are embodied in the life of Jesus are still leading and inspiring mankind. God the Father and Friend, man the brother, immortal life, the eternal law of duty,—these are the motor forces of civilization. They lie back of science, art, literature, philanthropy. Man's life dwindles and dies unless animated by an infinite hope. He is too great to live without God. Child of earth, he also belongs to heaven.

Therefore, we still keep Christmas, and still come together round the manger of the infant who has made all infancy sacred. We still listen to the song of the angels, who unite in sacred melody, "Glory to God in the highest," with "peace on earth, and good will to men." We still go with the Eastern sages and Numidian kings to carry to the young child our best gifts. All the progress of the world in science and civilization added to the power of Christianity. Fresh and young as at first, it sends out its missions, builds new churches, and unfolds into new activities. It is a growing power, because it can adapt itself to all the changes of time, meet new exigencies, and conquer by good will. Still the meek shall inherit the earth, still those who humble themselves shall be exalted.

No doubt there is here and there a revival of paganism. There is a paganism in literature which glorifies brute force. There is a pagan form of science which ignores humanity, and is willing to advance knowledge by the torture of animals or experiments on man. There is a pagan poetry which goes down to the lowest depths of sensualism and thinks it love of nature. There is paganism in public life, with its cynic sneer at everything which is not the selfish pursuit of personal advancement. But these are only eddies in the stream of thought.

counter-currents which show how strongly the main stream is setting in the opposite direction. These reactions, noisy for a time, are only temporary. Trust the human heart and its lasting needs, the human mind and its eternal convictions. No material philosophy, no matter how great its pretensions, can ever prevail against the intuitions of the soul and the aspirations of the heart. Christ comes nearer to the world to-day than ever before, for our conception of him is not now embarrassed by obscure theologies or hampered by stiff ritual. He comes as a human friend and brother, made in all respects like ourselves, yet without sin, showing to us that sin is not essential, that it is no part of our nature, and that with divine help we can rise above it. He comes as the Son of God, dwelling always in the Father's love, to convince us that we, too, can be children of God, loving and beloved. He comes as the great consoler, in sympathy with all human woes, bringing us into a like sympathy of brotherhood. He comes in no unnatural splendor, no superhuman glory, but as our nearest friend, our wayside companion, talking to us in such affectionate words that our hearts burn within us as we walk by the way. He comes to show us in his resurrection that all life tends upward, that it is its nature to conquer death, and that the grave has no power over the soul. Satisfying these great needs of conscience and heart, Jesus can never be superseded; but, so long as man continues to be man, Jesus will be the leader of earthly progress and human civilization.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

What shall we bring
Unto our King
For a Christmas offering?
A heart where love,
Like a brooding dove,
Makes earth like heaven to prove.

What shall we bring
Unto our King
For a Christmas offering?
Ring out a chime
Through every clime,
To tell that this is Christ's own time.

This shall we bring
Unto our King
For a Christmas offering:
Good will increase,
And all strife cease,
And every heart be filled with peace.

—*Julie Leonard.*

CHRISTMAS.

The Christmas chimes are pealing, softly pealing: the joyous sounds are ringing, ever louder and clearer, ever nearer and nearer, like a sweet-toned benediction falling on the ear. Glad ringers are pulling the ropes, and in one grand swell of melody Christmas, with its old yet ever new and marvellous mysteries, bursts triumphantly upon the world once more.

The cattle have turned their heads to the east and knelt down to worship the king cradled in the manger; the houses are decked with holly; the yule-log burns brightly; the gray shadows sweep away; the sun is up, and the bright-eyed children, who have lain awake all night listening for the patter of old Saint Nick's tiny steeds on the roof, only to fall asleep at the eventful moment, wake hurriedly to find the stockings running over with toys and sweetmeats.

Beautiful and right it is that gifts and good wishes should fill the air like snowflakes at Christmastide. And beautiful is the year in its coming and in its going,—most beautiful and blessed because it is always the *Year of Our Lord*.

I do not know a grander effect of music on the moral feelings than to hear the full choir and the pealing organ performing a Christmas anthem in a cathedral, and filling every part of the vast pile with triumphant harmony.—*Washington Irving.*

The star of the magi still stands over every cradle. The angel song is heard in the heart of every parent. Christmas makes an aureole of heavenly light around all the infants in Christian lands.

Every good gift is from above. But, as the year brings round this Christmas season, we can rejoice that God sent, in the fulness of time, that eldest Son, our elder brother, who has gifts for all mankind.

Christmas is a presage of the time when wars shall cease; when the whole Church shall be one; when the Christ of love and truth shall be everywhere accepted, obeyed, and loved, and the knowledge of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

We rejoice in Christ's hope for mankind; we are happy in his brotherly love; we are led by him to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God; we join in the angel's song, "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace, good will to men."

—*James Freeman Clarke.*

What does the Christ-child bring? The memorable year. Not over-joyous, nor yet bitter, only precious it lingers,—loved faces long gone, still not lost, neither unfelt; spells of silent longing, yet not empty, not utterly lonely, rather rare seasons of fond companionship; long days of struggle with faint gleams of triumph still o'ershadowed by towering ideals,—yet one looks aback from the year as from a height.

What does the Christ-child bring? Out of the checkered year, rife with failure and heavy with unuttered yearning, the Christ-child brings a man as the potter from the fragments, a vase; a new creation like unto himself, Son of God and Son of Man; strong, courageous, ready,—though one looks as from a valley toward the unscaled heights.

What does the Christ-child bring? Radiant with opportunity, another year with days breathing of possibility and hours glad with promise; a vision of service splendid in fruitful fields bursting with joy and harvest; encircling all, as from another world, a halo bright with hope.

This the Christ-child brings to me as I stand with open mind and pondering heart amid the years. May he bring the like to you, and your Christmas be a merry minstrel, your New Year one grand symphony of happy days.

—James Egbert.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

OFFERS.

"Black Beauty" is offered by Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

Mrs. E. E. Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1907-08; *Saturday Evening Post*, 1909; *The World's Work*, 1909; *Munsey*, 1909; *The World To-day*, 1909; *Literary Digest*, 1909-10, to date.

Mrs. H. T. Boyd, 17 Marsh Street, Dedham, Mass., offers the following: "Livingstone Anecdotes," Dr. Macaulay; "Gordon Ancestors," Dr. Macaulay; "Vignettes of

Great Revival in Eighteenth Century," E. P. Hood; "Adventures in New Guinea," James Chalmer; "Life of Oberlin," Mrs. Josephine Butler; "Practical Social Science," H. Jones, M.A.; "The Life of Latimer," Rev. R. Demans; "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes," by John Milton; "Wit and Wisdom of Lord Bacon"; "The Romance of Modern Missions," Miss Brightwell; "The Anxious Inquirer," J. A. James; "Madagascar of To-day," George A. Shaw; "Wit and Wisdom of Thomas Fuller"; "Adventures in Mongolia," by James Gilmore; "Canadian Life and Scenery," Marquis of Lorne; "The Jerusalem Sinner Saved," "The Heavenly Footman," John Bunyan; "Cowper's Letters with Memoir," edited by Dr. Macaulay; "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation"; "Life in Drierstock" (life in an American frontier town); "Peter, the Apprentice," Emma Leslie; "Away on the Waters"; "Pilgrim Street," Hesba Stretton; "Karl Krapp's Little Maidens," Annette Lyster; "The Crooked Sixpence," George E. Sargent; "The Manuscript Man"; "Olive's Story," Mrs. O. F. Walton; "Short Biographies for the People," in eight volumes, containing Luther, Farel, Calvin, Wickliffe, Sam Johnson, Polycarp, Fénelon, Isaac Newton, John Knox, John Wesley, Huss, Baxter, Cowper, Abraham Lincoln, Reginald Heber, John Howard, Bacon, King Alfred.

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends*,—Another year has passed and Christmas is almost here, and I come again asking all who will to help me with my Christmas tree I have every year for the poor children of my neighborhood,—books, papers, magazines, pictures, anything that will please children. No matter if it is old, we will be so grateful for anything. We are all poor and live on farms. The children have such few pleasures. Please help me to make Christmas bright for them. Many thanks to you all for your kindness in the past, and beg for a continuance of same. Mrs. J. Porter, Doerun, Colquitt County, Georgia, R. F. D. No. 3.

2. Mrs. Roy Cowles, West Derby, Vermont, a great sufferer for twenty-eight years, dependent on strangers for cheer, will be most grateful for any reading, letters, or cards.

3. George Stephans, Grayling, Crawford County, Michigan, lost all his books by fire. Would like reading matter for his family of children, all ages.

4. Mrs. A. C. Hottinger, Hebron, Ohio, who has been confined to her bed a number of years, helpless and crippled, and a constant sufferer, asks to be remembered on Christmas with books, post-cards, cheery letters.

5. *Dear Friends*,—I would be glad to receive some book,—a Bible or anything that would be a help to me. I feel like as if I ought to know more about the Bible. Although I have no religious books, I will be glad to receive some magazines,—just anything to help me along. Lois Bean, Seymour, Texas, Box 472.

6. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friend*,—It has been some time since I wrote you, and I wish to thank all who have been so kind to send me reading. I have enjoyed it so much. My dear father died in May after an illness of two years, and it is very lonesome for mother and me. Both my brothers are away, and it is indeed very lonely, and, as the long winter nights are coming on, I would love to have some more good books and magazines to read. Would especially like to have a large print Testament for my mother, and I would like some one to send me "Stepping Heavenward." Would be very glad if some one would send me the *Ladies' Home Journal* after they have read it, or any of John Fox, Jr.'s, books. Thanking you all again for your kindness in sending me reading. I get the little *Cheerful Letter* every month, and like to read it. With many good wishes for all its readers, Miss Gertrude E. Pedigo, Vinton, Virginia.

7. It has been some time since I have asked for any reading matter, and, as I have charge of a rural school, with an overwhelming attendance, and no books and reading matter in school, I'm going to ask if some of my *Cheerful Letter* friends couldn't send me something for them to read. I also wish to thank all of those who have been so kind in sending me literature. I heartily assure you that we have enjoyed and appreciated everything that has been sent us. I want especially to thank my *Cheerful Letter* friend who has been sending the *St. Nicholas*, and hope she will send it to us for another year. Best wishes. Maud M. Luck, care Mrs. Mary Powers, Mount, Virginia.

8. *Dear Mrs. Nichols*,—I sent in a request for reading matter last June, and have heard

nothing from it, so am going to write again, asking that I may be remembered with some reading matter,—books, papers, magazines,—in fact anything to read, as we live in a lonely place, and my husband and myself are both old and feeble, and are confined to the house so much in the winter and get so lonely. You will be conferring a great favor by sending us something to read. I send as a reference the Rev. Charles Rogers, Toronto, Kansas. Send reading matter and letters to Mrs. Isabelle Bailey, Rose, Kansas, R. D. 2.

9. *Kind Friend*,—I am very much obliged for *Everybody's Magazine*, *Christian Register*, and other reading sent me. I am seventy-four years of age, and can't work much. You are doing great good in your generation. May you prosper. Please send me "Discarded Daughter," "Viola; or, Adventures in the Far South-west," the Life of Oliver Cromwell, "Desert Island," "Conquering the Wilderness," "Count of Monte-Cristo," "Little Nell" (Dickens). I have been down with erysipelas some months, but am some better now. Nathan T. Hale, Ben Hur, Arkansas.

10. Mrs. Eva Beach, Liberty Home, Lamoni, Iowa, at present in this "Latter Day Saint" home, will be glad of three Bibles and some general reading.

11. I've been thinking for some time of writing to the *Cheerful Letter*, asking the friends to remember me with reading matter of some kind for the long winter evenings which will soon be with us. Am a little peculiar as to what I read, and would like to get any good books or periodicals that are interesting and uplifting, by standard authors. Have always in the past passed my books and other reading on to others. Hoping the *Cheerful Letter* friends will remember me, Mrs. Adelia Wofford, Athens, Texas.

12. Since I wrote you last I have been in the hospital at Bangor seventeen weeks. Right after our dear Brother John Wilson was here to see me, I was taken to the hospital, and stayed seven weeks in the Buck's extension weights to straighten me, as I was terribly out of shape. Then I was sent home to wait till I could go through the surgical treatment. So in February I was carried back and went through the surgical part. Now I can walk about the house and help about the light work, but still have to wear my steel jacket, and also a thick canvas rig, night and day; but, while I know I must

always wear these, as the doctors at the hospital tell me they can't do any more for me, I do feel thankful for these appliances, as I could not be out of bed were it not for them, and, although I suffer now, it is so nice not to have to lie in bed all the time. I just wish I could find words to express my feeling toward the dear Cheerful Letter friends who have sent me so much comfort. I would be glad to take each one by the hand and tell them how I love them and appreciate each and all they have done for me; but I haven't been able to write but little, and could not write each one. Our dear sister, Mrs. H. O. Blaisdell, is going through deep trouble. Her health is poor, and a few weeks ago they lost their buildings by fire, and saved hardly a thing to keep house with, not dishes to set their table, and scarcely bedding to make up a bed with. She is one of the Cheerful Letter friends, and very interested in the society, and I thought all would be glad to know of her misfortunes. She needs cheer at this time. Please remember her. A cheerful letter or a good sermon helps one, I know this; and, as I see that cold winter is coming, I just feel like asking you to please remember me as you have done in the past. Mrs. Clara A. Welch, St. Albans, Maine.

13. Prof. David P. Allen, Whiting Normal School, Lumberton, North Carolina, asks for current number of *Youth's Companion*.

14. Mattie E. Sale, Ronda, R. 2, Wilkes County, North Carolina, will be glad to get a pantomime of "My Faith looks up to Thee," or anything helpful in school work.

15. Susan Rice, Highlands, North Carolina, asks for six copies each of "Grimm's Fairy Tales" and "Robinson Crusoe." Children's books for school, such as story-books, or anything, will be greatly appreciated.

16. E. J. Kerlin, Metropolitan School, Waukesha, Wisconsin, asks for *Inland Printer* or *Country Life in America*. He offers "Martyrs in All Ages."

17. Alice Rogers, Sandidges, Virginia, asks for "Practical Agriculture," by Wilkinson, and Page's "Theory and Practice of Teaching."

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Mrs. C. M. Kingsley, Camden, Arkansas, formerly Rupert.

Miss Verda Francis, Dennison, Texas, R. F. D. 1, formerly Sherman, Texas.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

THE BOY'S PLACE IN THE HOME.

II.

He should have an Attractive Room.

Which brings me back to the concrete question under discussion. What is the boy's place in his home? What are his rights and what his privileges?

In the first place, I would let the boy understand very clearly that he has a right to a place of his own, and I would provide the place. I know few things more pathetic than the boy's room as I have seen it in certain houses,—a lumber-room you might think it from the odds and ends of furniture which have been relegated there. On the plea that he is out much of the time, little effort is made to render the apartment habitable when he is to be in it. No attempt at attractiveness or daintiness is apparent. "Boys don't care for such things."

Don't they? Have you ever endeavored to find out their real views on the subject? It is not likely that they crave a chintz or dotted-Swiss-over-pink-paper-muslin bower such as would appeal to their sisters. Boys aren't built that way. But, if you will give them solid, square furniture which is comfortable without being fragile, hang the right sort of pictures on the walls, put up plain curtains at the windows, supply a place for their books or their curios or their coins or their birds' eggs, or whatever special form their fads take, give them a good light to read and study by, I think you will find fully as much appreciation from your boys as you do from your girls, even if differently expressed. A boy doesn't, as a rule, go into voluble transports over what pleases him. But, when he says, "Thank you, mother," with a certain moved look, which you understand, about the corners of his mouth, or bestows a bear's hug upon you with the assurance that you are the best mother ever,—well, you are a pretty unreasonable woman if you are not as well satisfied as you would have been with voluble, rapturous acknowledgments.

His Home, but Others, Too.

This is part of what it means to give a boy a place of his own. Am I counselling the very sort of spoiling I have just condemned? Let me add the second part of the sentence. He is to have a place of his own *in his home*. That it is his home and not only his, but the home of others, is something he should not be suffered to forget. The home is the dwell-

ing of more than himself, and to them he owes as much consideration as they do to him. The conventions of the household should compel him as they do the rest, and the law of kindness, of unselfishness, of recognition of the rights, the privileges, the comforts of others, be at the foundation of everything.

Do you see all that this demands, all that it implies? If you grasp the fulness of the meaning of this precept and live up to its provisions, you have a key to many problems of domestic management. There, for example, is the vexed question of how much noise boys may be permitted to make in the house. Often there seems no middle ground concerning this. Either the boys are checked and hushed at every turn until they feel as though they were in a padded cell, or else they are allowed to make all the racket they choose on the plea that, if they can't do as they like at home, they will be driven to some unnamed and undescribed dissipation by their craving for liberty.

At the risk of being thought a heartless tyrant, I must confess that my sympathies go out to the mothers who keep a foot on the soft pedal. I am aware that I go contrary to all the theories of a certain class of educators when I say that I see no reason why children should be privileged to make night and day hideous for those about them on the plea that they have a right to expand their lungs and stretch their muscles.—*Christine Terhune Herrick, in The Woman's Home Companion.*

THE FRIENDLY STARS.

THE COMFORT OF THE STARS.

When I am overmatched by petty cares,
And things of earth loom large, and look to be
Of moment, how it soothes and comforts me
To step into the night and feel the airs
Of heaven fan my cheek, and, best of all,
Gaze up into those all-uncharted seas
Where swim the stately planets! Such as
these
Make mortal fret seem slight and temporal.

I muse on what of Life may stir among
Those spaces, knowing naught of metes nor
bars;
Undreamed-of dramas played in outmost
stars,
And lyrics by archangels grandly sung.
I grow familiar with the solar runes
And comprehend of worlds the mystic
birth;
Ringed Saturn, Mars, whose fashion apes
the earth,
And Jupiter, the giant, with his moons.

Then, dizzy with the unspeakable sights
above,

Rebuked by Vast on Vast, my puny heart
Is greated for its transitory part,
My trouble merged in wonder and in love.

—*Richard Burton, in the Congregationalist.*

[The *Cheerful Letter* will print each month, if it finds space, an extract from "The Friendly Stars," by Martha Evans Martin, published by Harper's, 1907. It is hoped that these extracts will help readers to form a personal acquaintance with some of the first-magnitude stars; but each of the 252 pages of the book is so interesting, it is very difficult not to quote the whole.]

Unlike the sun and moon and the planets, each star rises always at practically the same point in the heavens. It comes back to the starting-point each day four minutes earlier than the day before, which makes it rise about an hour earlier each fortnight, and in twelve months it comes twenty-four hours earlier.

Among the hundreds of thousands of stars in the universe there are twenty which are so much brighter than the others as to make a class by themselves, and are known as stars of the first magnitude. To find any of these stars only two things are necessary to be known,—the constellation known as the Big Dipper and the North Star, Polaris. The Big Dipper is a large constellation (part of a still larger one called the Great Bear), consisting of seven principal stars, all very bright, grouped so as to resemble the outline of a dipper. This constellation is so conspicuous that it is known to most persons, and in our latitude it is above the horizon all night. The two stars on the outer side of the bowl are called the "pointers," because a line drawn through them from bottom to top will point towards the North Star, and, if extended to about five times the distance between the two stars, will end so nearly at Polaris that there will be no mistaking that star. The distance between the two pointers is about five degrees, and this is an important thing to keep in mind. These known five degrees may be used as a unit of measure in finding other stars.

In looking for the brightest stars one may sometimes find himself confused by four bright stars which are not, after all, true stars, but are the planets Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars. Venus and Jupiter are at certain times brighter than the brightest stars, Saturn is usually as bright as a first-magnitude star, and Mars varies so that it sometimes equals Saturn in brilliancy and

sometimes is not so bright. They do not twinkle as the stars do, but shine with a steadier light. Jupiter is white, Venus is a little tinged with yellow, Saturn is decidedly yellow, and Mars is fiery red.—*"The Friendly Stars,"* by *Martha Evans Martin*.

NATURAL HISTORY.

FRIENDLY WILD ROBINS.

When wild birds find that the people about them are always kind and never trouble them, they often get very tame. I have known of several cases of robins so tame that they did not at all fear the family near whom they lived.

I have told in another book about a pair of robins who nested in one yard for fourteen years. If they were not the same pair all the time, they were descendants of one pair; for they came every spring to the same old places, just as tame and fearless as they had been when they left them in the fall—fearless of the family, I mean. They were as shy of strangers as any robins, but any one of the family could look at a nest or pick up a young robin without frightening the birds.

One day there arose a great hue and cry on the lawn, and some one from the house went out to see what was the matter. All the robins of the neighborhood were flying about, scolding and crying at the top of their voices, and circling round the head of a man who was walking quickly away.

It seems he had picked up a young robin just out of the nest, and the parents had called in their neighbors to help rescue it. The lady, who saw what was the trouble, went to the man, and claimed the youngster as a "tame bird." The man gave it to her, and in an instant the cries ceased. Not only the parents knew the little one was safe in her hands, but all the other birds seemed to understand it also. She carried the baby bird back to the lawn, and put him in a safe place, while the elders looked on perfectly satisfied.

I know of another young robin picked up from the ground, when he was just out of the nest, to save him from cats. He was not caged, but allowed to go all over the house and out of doors.

When his kind mistress thought he was old enough to take care of himself and keep out of the way of cats, she tried to give him his liberty. Again and again she carried him out of doors away from the house and left him, but he would not be left. He would stand on a branch, and shriek and call like a lost

child till she came back. Then he would fly to her shoulder, rub his head against her cheek, and give sweet little notes, showing his love for her and his delight at getting her back.

Another lady, who nursed a little robin that was hurt, had the same experience. The bird was so happy with her that he would not leave her. She told me she had sometimes set him on her hat, and walked about the streets and into shops with her live-bird ornament, and he never thought of leaving her.

She often took her pet into a grove, and let him fly about wherever he chose. He liked it very much; but, the minute she started up to leave him, he flew to her. He would not be left.

I could tell you other stories to show that, when birds are well treated and made happy with people, they get much attached to them and often prefer to stay with them. But they must be well fed, kindly treated, allowed a good deal of liberty, and, above all, never teased.

A lady told me a funny story about a robin. He was brought up in the house from the nest, and never learned to sing the robin song, for he had not heard it. He plainly tried to make some sort of music, and one of the family taught him to whistle "Yankee Doodle." He whistled it perfectly, and never tried to sing anything else.

Once this Yankee Doodle robin got out of the house and flew up into a tree. When the wild birds came about him, he entertained them by whistling his favorite air, which sent the birds off in a panic.

Robins have been known to imitate words. One that I know of lived in a house with a parrot who talked, and learned from him to say "Aunt Maria" as plainly as the parrot himself.—*Olive Thorne Miller*.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

TO FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

If on this verse of mine
Those eyes shall ever shine
Whereto sore-wounded men have looked for
life,
Think not that for a rhyme,
Nor yet to fit the time,
I name thy name,—true victress of this strife!
But let it serve to say
That, when we kneel to pray,
Prayers rise for thee thine ear shall never
know;
And that thy gallant deed,
For God, and for our need,
Is in all hearts, as deep as love can go.

'Tis good that thy name springs
 From two of earth's fair things—
 A stately city and a soft-voiced bird;
 'Tis well that in all homes,
 When thy sweet story comes,
 And brave eyes fill—that pleasant sounds be
 heard.
 O voice! in night of fear,
 As night's bird, soft to hear,
 O great heart! raised like city on a hill;
 O watcher! worn and pale,
 Good Florence Nightingale,
 Thanks, loving thanks, for thy large work
 and will!
 England is glad of thee;
 Christ, for thy charity,
 Take thee to joy when hand and heart are
 still!

—Edwin Arnold.

(Continued from last number.)

The official position which the government had accorded Miss Nightingale was Superintendent of the Nursing Staff in the East, and the title by which she eventually became known was that of lady-in-chief.

Her control extended over the nursing staffs of all the hospitals, some eight in number, in which our wounded soldiers were placed on the Bosphorus and the Levantine. The first and chief scene of Miss Nightingale's personal administrations, however, was the great barrack hospital at Scutari, lent to the British government by the Turkish authorities. It was beautifully situated on a hill overlooking the Bosphorus, and commanded a view of the fair city of Constantinople, with its castellated walls, marble palaces and domes, rising picturesquely on the horizon. No more enchanting prospect could have been desired than that which met the lady-in-chief when she reached Scutari, the "silver city," held in such veneration by the Turks. The town seemed placed in a perfect Garden of Eden, and the lovely blue of the Eastern sky enhanced the beauty of the scene.

After being disembarked at the ferry below the hospital from the vessels which brought them from the battlefields of the Crimea, the wounded men either walked or were dragged or carried up the hill to the hospital. Surgical, fever, and even cholera cases came along the road together in one long stream of suffering humanity.

"Medical assistance would naturally be expected by the invalid as soon as he found himself in a place of shelter, but many lay waiting for their turn until death anticipated the doctor. The medical men toiled with unwearied assiduity, but their numbers were inadequate to the work." Invalids

were set to take care of invalids, and the dying nursed the dying.

It was a heart-breaking experience for the lady-in-chief when she made her first round of the wards at Scutari. The beds were reeking with infection, and the "sheets," she relates, "were of canvas, and so coarse that the wounded men begged to be left in their blankets. It was, indeed, impossible to put men in such a state of emaciation into those sheets. There was no bedroom furniture of any kind, and only empty beer or wine bottles for candlesticks."

It is not altogether surprising that the doctors and hospital authorities did not immediately welcome the very unique band of sisters who had come to their assistance. These already overwrought gentlemen were disposed to think that the ladies would prove a greater hindrance than help. In those days it was regarded as unavoidable that a soldier should suffer, and humanitarian attempts to lessen the suffering were considered sentimental and effeminate.

Only twenty-four hours after the arrival of Miss Nightingale at Scutari, the wounded from the battle of Inkerman began to arrive in appalling numbers, and soon every inch of room in the general and in the barrack hospitals was filled with sufferers. Many of the men had indeed no other resting-place than the muddy ground outside. The lady-in-chief had no time to initiate reform, collect stores, or get any plans for the relief of the patients into working order before this fearful avalanche of wounded soldiery came upon her.

It was the testing moment of her life. Had Florence Nightingale failed at this crisis in personal endurance or in the power to inspire her subordinates with a like courage, her mission would have sunk into a benevolent futility. She and her nurses might have run hither and thither, smoothing pillows, administering gruel, and doing other kind and womanly service; but, grateful as that would be to the poor fellows in their extreme misery, it would not have remedied the root of the evil. The lady-in-chief had to look beyond the present moment, though not neglectful of its demands, to the more important future, and institute a system of nursing reform which should make such scenes as she now witnessed impossible. It was her ability to do this which lifted Florence Nightingale into such a supreme position.

Such was the lady-in-chief. She came to Scutari as something far more even than an efficient nurse. She brought the organizing and governing faculty and the brain power

of which the officials in charge seemed bereft. Delicate, high-bred, and retiring in nature as Miss Nightingale was, she possessed the subtle quality which gave her command over others, that undefinable something which broke down the opposition of the most conservative obstructionist when he came under her personal influence. She was unfettered by precedent or red tape, and brought to her task a clear idea of the administrative mechanism which was needed to afford due care and provision for the prostrate soldiery.

Her woman's nature was roused to indignation at the sight of suffering which she could only regard as the result of unbending and unthinking routine, and she brought her quick intuitions and agile brain to remedy the evil. When men were dying daily by the score for the want of suitable nourishment, she declined to listen to under officials who feared to disobey regulations by opening stores without the usual order, and took the responsibility of having the packages undone. The lady-in-chief was herself a strict disciplinarian, or she would never have brought order out of chaos; but she had humanity enough to know when the iron rule might be relaxed in the interests of those in her care. Her common sense, her spirit of unselfish devotion, and her strong, though gentle, persuasiveness gradually overcame the prejudice of the constituted authorities against the new element introduced into hospital work.

We read in the thrilling accounts of the period how the lady-in-chief went her rounds at night, passing along the endless corridors and through the hospital wards carrying a little lamp, the gleam of which lighted her progress of mercy and love. Dying men turned on their pillows to bless her shadow as it passed. In far-away New England the idea of "The Lady with the Lamp" inspired the muse of Longfellow:—

"A lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good
Heroic womanhood."

—"Life of Florence Nightingale," Sarah A. Tooley.

MARGARET FULLER.

(Continued from last number.)

When she came to Concord, she was already rich in friends, rich in experiences, rich in culture. She was well read in French, Italian, and German literature. She had learned Latin and a little Greek. But her

English reading was incomplete; and, while she knew Molière and Rousseau, and any quantity of French letters, memoirs, and novels, and was a dear student of Dante and Petrarch, and knew German books more cordially than any other person, she was little read in Shakespeare; and I believe I had the pleasure of making her acquainted with Chaucer, with Ben Jonson, with Herbert, Chapman, Ford, Beaumont, and Fletcher, with Bacon and Sir Thomas Browne. I was seven years her senior, and had the habit of idle reading in old English books, and, though not much versed, yet quite enough to give me the right to lead her. She fancied that her sympathy and taste had led her to an exclusive culture of Southern European books.

Of the friends who surrounded her at that period it is neither easy to speak nor not to speak. A life of Margaret is impossible without them, she mixed herself so inextricably with her company; and, when this little book was first projected, it was proposed to entitle it "Margaret and her Friends," the subject persisting to offer itself in the plural number. But, on trial, that form proved impossible, and it only remained that the narrative, like a Greek tragedy, should suppose the Chorus always on the stage, sympathizing and sympathized with by the queen of the scene.

Yet I remember these persons as a fair, commanding troop, every one of them adorned by some splendor of beauty, of grace, of talent, or of character, and comprising in their band persons who have since disclosed sterling worth and elevated aims in the conduct of life.

Three beautiful women were her friends. One of these early became, and long remained, nearly the central figure in Margaret's brilliant circle, attracting to herself, by her grace and her singular natural eloquence, every feeling of affection, hope, and pride.

Two others I recall, whose rich and cultivated voices in song were—one a little earlier, the other a little later—the joy of every house into which they came.

I remember another, whom every muse inspired, skilful alike with the pencil and the pen, and by whom both were almost condemned for their inadequateness in the height and scope of her aims. "With her," said Margaret, "I can talk of anything. She is like me. She is able to look facts in the face. We enjoy the clearest, widest, most direct communication. She may be no happier than —, but she will know her own mind too clearly to make any great

mistake in conduct, and will learn a deep meaning from her days."

Another was a lady who was devoted to landscape painting, and who enjoyed the distinction of being the only pupil of Allston, and who, in her alliance with Margaret, gave as much honor as she received by the security of her spirit and by the heroism of her devotion to her friend. Her friends called her "the perpetual peace offering," and Margaret says of her, "She is here; her neighborhood casts the mildness and purity, too, of the moonbeam on the else parti-colored scene."

There was another lady, more late and reluctantly entering Margaret's circle, with a mind as high and more mathematically exact, drawn by taste to Greek, as Margaret to Italian, genius, tempted to do homage to Margaret's flowing expressive energy, but still more inclined and secured to her side by the good sense and the heroism which Margaret disclosed, perhaps not a little by the sufferings which she addressed herself to alleviate as long as Margaret lived.

She wore this circle of friends, when I first knew her, as a necklace of diamonds about her neck. They were so much to each other that Margaret seemed to represent them all, and to know her was to acquire a place with them. The confidences given her were their best, and she held them to them. She was an active, inspiring companion and correspondent, and all the art, the thought, and the nobleness in New England seemed at that moment related to her and she to it. She was everywhere a welcome guest. The houses of her friends in town and county were open to her, and every hospitable attention eagerly offered. Her arrival was a holiday, and so was her abode. She stayed a few days, often a week, more seldom a month, and all tasks that could be suspended were put aside to catch the favorable hour, in walking, riding, or boating, to talk with this joyful guest, who brought wit, anecdotes, love-stories, tragedies, oracles, with her, and, with her broad web of relations to so many fine friends, seemed like the queen of some parliament of love, who carried the key to all confidences, and to whom every question had been finally referred.

She had so many tasks of her own that she was a very easy guest to entertain, as she could be left to herself, day after day, without apology. According to our usual habit, we seldom met in the forenoon. After dinner we read something together, or walked or rode. In the evening she came to the library, and many and many a conversation

was there held, whose details, if they could be preserved, would justify all encomiums. They interested me in every manner: talent, memory, stern introspection, poetic play, religion, the finest personal feeling, the aspects of the future,—each followed each in full activity, and left me, I remember, enriched and sometimes astonished by the gifts of my guest.

I have inquired diligently of those who saw her often, and in different companies, concerning her habitual tone, and something like this is the report: In conversation Margaret seldom, except as a special grace, admitted others upon an equal ground with herself. She was exceedingly tender when she pleased to be, and most cherishing in her influence; but to elicit this tenderness it was necessary to submit first to her personally. When a person was overwhelmed by her, and answered not a word, except "Margaret, be merciful to me, a sinner," then her love and tenderness would come like a seraph's, and often an acknowledgment that she had been too harsh, and even a craving for pardon, with a humility, which, perhaps, she had caught from the other. But her instinct was not humility, that was always an afterthought.

This arrogant tone of her conversation, if it came to the subject of comment, of course she defended, and with such broad good nature and on grounds of simple truth as were not easy to set aside. She quoted from Manzoni's "Carmagnola" the lines:—

"God forbid that any one should conceive more highly of me than I myself." Meantime, the tone of her journals is humble, tearful, religious, and rises easily into prayer.

LETTER TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

"I am repelled by your account of your party. It is beneath you to amuse yourself with active satire, with what is vulgarly called quizzing, when such a person as — chooses to throw himself in your way. I sympathize with your keen perception of his ridiculous points. But to laugh a whole evening at vulgar nondescripts,—is that an employment for one who was born passionately to love, to admire, to sustain truth? This would be much more excusable in a chameleon like me. Yet whatever may be the vulgar view of my character, I can truly say I know not the hour in which I ever looked for the ridiculous. It has always been forced upon me and is the accident of my existence. I would not want the sense of it when it comes, for that would show an obtuseness of mental organization; but, on

peril of my soul, I would not move an eyelash to look for it."

But qualities of this kind can only be truly described by the impression they make on the bystander, and it is certain that her friends excused in her, because she had a right to it, a tone which they would have reckoned intolerable in any other. Many years since one of her earliest and fastest friends quoted Spenser's sonnet as accurately descriptive of Margaret:—

"Rudely thou wrongest my dear heart's desire,
In finding fault with her too portly pride;
The thing which I do most in her admire
Is of the world unworthy most envied.
For, in those lofty looks is close implied
Scorn of base things, disdain of foul dishonor,
Threatening rash eyes which gaze on her so wide
That loosely they ne dare look upon her;
Such pride is praise, such portliness is honor,
That boldened innocence bears in her eyes;
And her fair countenance, like a goodly banner,
Spreads in defiance of all enemies.
Was never in this world aught worthy tried,
Without a spark of some self-pleasing pride."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, in *Biography of Margaret Fuller*.

THREE POEMS.

JULIA WARD HOWE TO JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

I.

The Fiftieth Birthday, April 4, 1860.

A weight I bear, and a task I share,
Of glad and generous sympathy;
These loving hearts have all their parts,
In the spring-song I must echo thee.

Each eloquent soul would keep control
Of the poet's slender gift of words—
As an instrument that should give consent
To the waiting music of many birds.

But the wings of love that bear above,
Shall help me to bring my burden near;
And my stammering tongue, leaving half
unsung,
Can tell how we prize thee, Master dear.

For these fifty years we thank with tears
The tender hand that hath counted them;
And we thank again for those that remain
Still veiled in God's unseen diadem.

The roses flung, and the incense swung,
Are for youth's bright matins and man-
hood's prime;
And the tapers are lit for the patient feet
That follow the pensive vesper chime.

Within thy fold, safe as of old,
Still gather us each bright Sabbath morn;
Call home thy sheep that wander and weep,
Comfort the weary and brier-torn.

That years a score may sweep us o'er,
Walking yet serene the heavenward way,
A loving band that the Shepherd's hand
Brings near the bounds of the brighter day.

Till transfigured quite, in its holy light,
We hear, still clinging close to thee,
"Father, I come to my heavenly home,
With the children thou hast given me."

II.

The Seventieth Birthday, April 4, 1880.

Who knocks? Pass on, I pray:
Thou hast mistook the way,
All that I had I gave in days of yore.
If that thy need be great
Since age doth me abate,
Ask jocund youth to help thee from his store.

Yet stay. For whom the feast?
"For one to whom the least
Of what we owe is such fond gratitude
As from the dumb might wring
Attempted uttering,
And from thy lips the breath of song re-
newed."

Then shall my heart indite
Whate'er my hand can write
From out the wasted treasure of my time;
For, silent here to sit,
And fear my failing wit,
My soul should count it very near a crime.

'Twas thy persuasive thought
My errant fancy caught
When height of wisdom matched not length
of years;
When still, with airy schemes,
And many-featured dreams,
I wrought at childish tasks with childish tears.

If ever to the good
Of holy womanhood
Mine own with saintlier spirits did aspire,
Where was the lesson writ,
My slumberous sense to hit,
As by thy hand, in characters of fire?

For such a glittering net
Doth human souls beset,
That from its bonds they have no power to
flee,
Till smites that sword of truth
Which owes no error ruth,
And by pain's costly ransom they are free.

'Twere idle in this verse
The reasons to rehearse
For which we crown to-day thy front beloved;
Thou didst thy life impart
With such a gracious art,
We scarcely knew the spell by which we
moved.

What nuptials hast thou blest!
What dear ones laid to rest!
What infants welcomed with the holy sign!
Life's hospitality
Was so akin to thee
That half of all our good and ill was thine.

In dark, perplexing days,
When sorrow silenced praise,
We saw thy light above the vapors dim.
In battle's din and shout
Thy clarion blast rang out:
"The victory is God's, we follow him."

Thy life has had, like ours,
Its sunshine and its showers,
Has reached the heights of joy, the depths of
grief.
But richer hath it been
By all the gifts serene
That make the leader, brother, friend and
chief.

Bring then the palm and vine,
Roses with lilies twine,
And let us image in our offered wreath
The life enriched with toil,
The consecrating oil,
And love that fears not time, and knows not
death.

III.

The Hundredth Birthday, April 4, 1910.

Richer gift can no man give
Than he doth from God receive.
We in greatness would find pleasure,
But we must accept our measure.
Let us question then the grave,
Querying what the Master gave,
Whom, in his immortal state,
Grateful love would celebrate.

Only human love was his,
With its thin-worn mysteries;
Shall we not describe him man,
BUILT to last a little span?
Like our earth—his dwelling-place,
Swung aloft 'twixt time and space,
Tuned to ecstasy and pain,
Ever prompted to attain
For the blessing of the curse
That Eternities rehearse;
Lifting from the past its veil,
What of him doth now avail?

Just a mirror in his breast
That revealed a heavenly guest,
Just the love that made us free
Of the same high company.
This he brought us, this he left
When we were of him bereft.

He was resolute and bright,
Was a hero in the fight,
Trained the gifts of speech and song
Holy lessons to prolong;
Claimed no laurel—snatched no prize,
Took his wisdom from the wise,
Made the great Apostle's dream
Present still and potent seem.

Human fortunes we must share,
Must endeavor, must forbear,
Must accomplish tasks of pain,
Try and turn and try again;
But we are enriched, I know,
By the boons he did bestow,
And Golconda has no mine
Could his legacy outshine,
If we keep, through good and ill,
James Freeman's angel with us still.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

With December concludes the centennial year of James Freeman Clarke and Edmund Hamilton Sears.

Both these men were poets, preachers, and writers. But Mr. Sears is probably better known by his beautiful hymns than by his books, though "The Fourth Gospel, the Heart of Christ" and "Foregleams of Immortality" are classics to all who do know them. It is safe to predict that a hundred years from now the English-speaking world will still keep Christmas by singing, "Calm on the Listening Ear of Night" and "It came upon the Midnight clear."

It was not the intention of the editor to give any more space to articles connected with James Freeman Clarke than the short sermon extract and the passages quoted in the "Still Hour." But there was something so interesting in the fact that Mrs. Howe, who wrote a poem fifty years ago for the fiftieth birthday of Dr. Clarke, should not only have written another twenty years later, but also one for the centennial birthday, last April, that it would have been hard to resist giving them all three together, in saying farewell to the year 1910.

And in October we were called upon to bid farewell to Mrs. Howe, too late for even a brief notice in the November *Cheerful Letter* (which was already in the printer's hands).

Now many sketches of her life and tributes to her memory have appeared, and there seems nothing for us to add, except that all who knew her felt it a happiness to see the last years of one to whom old age meant only more youth, and death more life.

We give here one little poem of hers, perhaps less well known than the "Battle Hymn," which made her famous,—a fitting note with which to conclude any year, and this one especially:—

THE MINISTRATION OF OUR
DEPARTED FRIENDS.

A NEW YEAR'S REVERIE.

While every year is taking one and another from the ranks of life and usefulness or the charmed circle of friendship and love, it is soothing to remember that the spiritual world is gaining in riches through the poverty of this.

In early life, with our friends all around us,—hearing their voices, cheered by their smiles,—death and the spiritual world are to us remote, misty, and half-fabulous; but, as we advance in our journey, and voice after voice is hushed and form after form vanishes from our side, and our shadow falls almost solitary on the hillside of life, the soul, by necessity of its being, tends to the unseen and spiritual, and pursues in another life those it seeks in vain in this.

For, with every friend that dies, dies also some especial form of social enjoyment whose being depended on the peculiar character of that friend, till late in the afternoon of life the pilgrim seems to himself to have passed over to the unseen world in successive portions half his own spirit. . . .

It may be possible that a friend is sometimes taken because the Divine One sees that his ministry can act more powerfully from the unseen world than amid the infirmities of mortal intercourse. Here the soul, distracted and hemmed in by human events and by bodily infirmities, often scarce knows itself, and makes no impression on others correspondent to its desires. The mother would fain electrify the heart of her child. She yearns and burns in vain to make her soul effective on its soul, and to inspire it with a spiritual and holy life; but all her own weaknesses, faults, and mortal cares cramp and confine her till death breaks all fetters, and then, first truly alive, risen, purified, and at rest, she may do calmly, sweetly, and certainly what, amid the tempests and tossings of life, she labored for painfully and fitfully. So, also, to generous souls who burn for the good of man, who deplore the shortness of life and the little that is permitted to any individual agency on earth, does this belief open a heavenly field. Think not, father or brother, long laboring for man, till thy sun stands on the western mountains,—think not that thy day in this world is over. Perhaps, like Jesus, thou hast lived a human life and gained a human experience, to become, under and like him, a savior of thousands. Thou hast been through the prepa-

ration; but thy real work of good, thy full power of doing is yet to begin.

But, again, there are some spirits (and those of earth's choicest) to whom, so far as enjoyment to themselves or others is concerned, this life seems to have been a total failure. A hard hand from the first, and all the way through life, seems to have been laid upon them: they seem to live only to be chastened and crushed, and we lay them in the grave at last in mournful silence. To such what a vision is opened by this belief! This hard discipline has been the school and task-work by which their soul has been fitted for their invisible labors in a future life; and, when they pass the gates of the grave, their course of benevolent acting first begins, and they find themselves delighted possessors of what through many years they have sighed for,—the power of doing good. The year just past, like all other years, has taken from a thousand circles the sainted, the just, and the beloved; there are spots in a thousand graveyards which have become this year dearer than all the living world; but in the loneliness of sorrow how cheering to think that our lost ones are not wholly gone from us! They still may move about in our homes, shedding around an atmosphere of purity and peace, promptings of good and reproofs of evil. We are compassed about by a cloud of witnesses, whose hearts throb in sympathy with every effort and struggle, and who thrill with joy at every success. How should this thought check and rebuke every worldly feeling and unworthy purpose, and enshrine us, in the midst of a forgetful and unspiritual world, with an atmosphere of heavenly peace! They have overcome, have risen, are crowned, glorified; but still they remain to us, our assistants, our comforters, and in every hour of darkness their voice speaks to us, "So we grieved, so we struggled, so we fainted, so we doubted; but we have overcome, we have obtained, we have seen, we have found, and in our victory behold the certainty of thy own."—*Harriet Beecher Stowe*.

Christmas suspends the quarrels of sects. The bigot on the one side and the infidel on the other take each other's hands over the child's cradle. He who bitterly attacks Christianity and he who defends it with equal bitterness enjoy a kindly Christmas side by side.

All of God's sun shines on our commonest day.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club Secretary.

In sending subscriptions for the *Cheerful Letter*, address The Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Subscriptions, 50 cents a year.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The regular monthly meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will take place on Friday, December 2, at 10.30 A.M. All interested are cordially invited to be present.

LIBRARY NOTICE.

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